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STUDENT REPORT

SICILY - ANALYSIS OF COMBINED OPERATIONS IN BATTLE

MAJOR PETER S. GILLIES 84-0990

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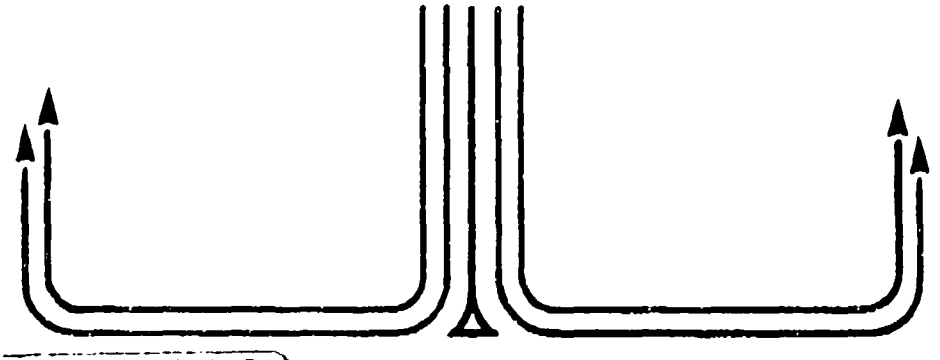

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requirements for graduation.

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Presents a historical battle analysis of the Allied Sicilian Campaign of World War II. Examines Allied Mediterranean strategy that led to decision to invade Sicily. Explores problems associated with combined operational planning. Project contains a chronological campaign description. Battle results, including the highlighting of critical aspects, are featured. Principles of War, as defined in Air Force Manual 1-1, are used to analyze the Sicilian Campaign.

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PREFACE

The Sicilian Campaign of World War II was the first Allied large scale amphibian assault over hostile beaches. It was in several ways a prelude to the 1944 Allied invasion of Normandy. This project provides an historical analysis of the Sicily Campaign utilizing the Principles of War. Chapter one begins with a chronological discussion of the strategy formulation and planning processes which precipitated the invasion. This is followed by a battle description highlighting the critical aspects and results of the campaign. Chapter two offers a battle analysis which identifies examples of the application or violation of the various principles of war. Finally, Chapter three provides guidance for an organized seminar discussion. All chapters emphasize the idiosyncrasies of combined operations.

It is intended that this project be used, in whole or in part, as instructional material for the Warfare Studies Phase of the Air Command and Staff College.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Gillies graduated from the Ohio State University and was commissioned in the Regular Army in August, 1969. Assigned to the Infantry, he served as Weapons Platoon Leader and Executive Officer in Company B, 4th Battalion, 30th Infantry, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Other assignments include: Service Platoon Commander, 271st Aviation Company (Assault Support Helicopter), Korea; Commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 7th Transportation Battalion (Terminal), Fort Eustis, Virginia; Service Platoon Commander, 242nd Aviation Company (Assault Support Helicopter), Fort Wainwright, Alaska; Assistant Division Materiel Officer, 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized), Fort Stewart, Georgia; and, Commander, 609th Transportation Company (Aviation Intermediate Maintenance), Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia. In 1978, Major Gillies received a Masters Degree in Transportation Management from the Florida Institute of Technology. Major Gillies' military schooling includes: Infantry Officer Basic Course, Transportation Officer Orientation Course, Airborne School, Ranger Course, Rotary Wing Flight School, Aircraft Maintenance Officers Course, Transportation Advanced Officers Course, and Command and General Staff College.

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Chapter One

CAMPAIGN DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

With the North African campaign of World War II coming to a close, the Allies decided to extend operations in the Mediterranean by invading Sicily. Under the supervision of the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff, planning commenced in January 1943. (10:81) With the invasion targeted for July, the planning process brought together, for the first time, many of the political and military leaders that would later lead the invasion of Normandy. (2:234) An early familiarity with these leaders is essential to understanding Sicily strategy, planning, and battle description. For this purpose, an overview of these leaders and their command relationships is provided in figure 1.

STRATEGIES

Several conferences held in 1942 and 1943 provide the basis for Allied strategy in the Mediterranean. The Washington Conference, in January 1942, determined Allied Grand Strategy. The essential elements of this strategy are listed below along with inserts showing linkage with the decision to invade Sicily:

(a) The realization of the victory program of armaments, which first and foremost requires the security of the main areas of war industry.
(b) The maintenance of essential communications [i.e.

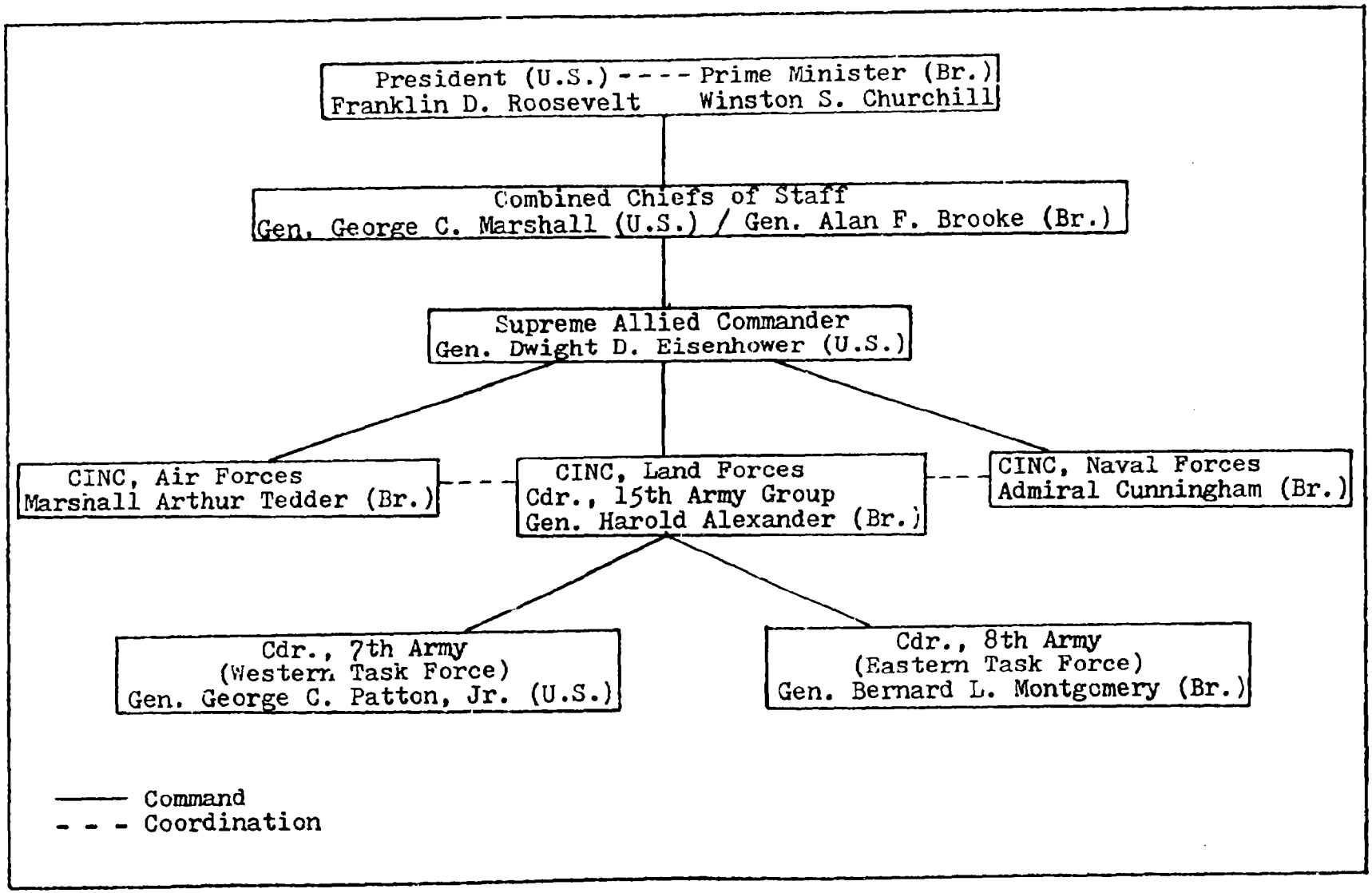

Figure 1. Chain of Command

keeping the Mediterranean open to Allied shipping].
(c) Closing and tightening the ring around Germany. [i.e. certainly Sicily contributed to this aim, and if Italy could eventually be defeated in total, Germany could be fighting isolated and on multiple fronts].
(d) Wearing down and undermining Germany resistance by air bombardment, blockade, subversive activities, and propaganda [i.e. continued Allied operations in the Mediterranean, such as Sicily, contributed to this type of attrition warfare].
(e) The continuous development of offensive action against Germany [the successes in North Africa could be exploited much more rapidly by invading Sicily, as compared to the long delay involved in shipping Allied armies to Britain for a cross-Channel invasion].
(f) Maintaining only such positions in the Eastern theatre as will safeguard vital interests and to deny to Japan access to raw materials vital to her continuous war effort while we are concentrating on the defeat of Germany. (7:19-20)

Although the first five elements above had some relation to Sicily, the last one resulted in considerable Allied debate at the Casablanca Conference in 1943. For a year, the Americans had been pressuring the British for an Allied invasion of Europe across the English Channel. (5:56-57) Churchill favored a Mediterranean or "Soft Underbelly" strategy. His strategic analogy used a crocodile superimposed on Europe with the head over Western Europe representing Germany's strength. The "Soft Underbelly" of the crocodile pointed south showing Germany's vulnerability. (9:270; 12:307) Churchill favored assaulting German weakness in the southern theater, then advancing north to Germany. With the help of the Russians on the Eastern Front, he believed this strategy would eventually wear down the Germans, making possible a final and decisive Allied cross-Channel invasion in 1944. (7:35) Churchill objected strongly to the American view that a cross-Channel invasion of Europe should occur in 1943. (7:34) Believing German defenses

in France were too formidable for Allied attack, Churchill wanted additional time to develop Allied strength in England.

Contrary to this British view at Casablanca, the Americans favored taking the battle directly to the heart of Germany. (7:22) Of the Allies, only the United States had to split its resources between two theaters of war. With Germany out of the way, it was felt that war with Japan could be decisively terminated. The Americans, who still had not been avenged for the attack on Pearl Harbor, wanted tangible victories over the Japanese. (7:20) There was also a feeling among American leaders that Churchill's "Soft Underbelly" strategy was just delaying the inevitable cross-Channel invasion. Further, there was a feeling that this strategy was a front for the actual British objective of protecting the existence of its colonial empire. (2:220; 7:22-24) Additionally, the Americans were being pressured by the Russians to open a second Allied front in Europe in 1943. (5:55) Russian Premier Joseph Stalin applied similar pressure to Churchill, although with less emotional effect. (9:342) At Casablanca, the Americans argued that a cross-Channel invasion was necessary in order to relieve German pressure on the Russians. Although written to Churchill, the following message clearly demonstrates Stalin's plea for a second front:

> Thus at height of our fighting against Hitler's forces i.e., in February-March, the weight of Anglo-American offensive in North Africa [on-going while the Sicily campaign was being contemplated] has not only not increased but there has been no development of offensive at all and time limit for operations set by yourself was extended. Meanwhile Germany succeeded in transferring 36 divisions [including 6 armored divisions] from west against Soviet troops. It is easy to see what difficulties this created for Soviet armies and

how position of Germans on Soviet-German front was alleviated. [Here, Stalin is apparently stating that operations outside of the European mainland i.e., North Africa, are not resulting in any relief of the eastern front.]

Fully realizing the importance of Husky [the code name for the contemplated Allied invasion of Sicily] I must however point out it cannot replace second front in France....

Now as before I see main task in hastening of second front in France. As you remember you admittedly possibility of such a front already in 1942 and in any case not later than in the spring of 1943.

The Soviet troops spent whole winter in tense fighting which continues even now. Hitler is carrying out important measures with a view to replenshing and increasing his army for spring and summer operations against U.S.S.R. In these circumstances it is important that blow from the west should not be put off and that it should be struck in the spring or in early summer.

I recognize difficulties of Anglo-American operations in Europe. Notwithstanding all that I deem it my duty to warn you in the strongest possible manner how dangerous would be from the viewpoint of our common cause further delay in opening second front in France. This is the reason why uncertainty of your statements concerning contemplated Anglo-American offensive across channel arouses grave anxiety in me about which I feel I cannot be silent. (9:321-322)

As can be seen, Stalin was displeased with Anglo-American contributions through 1942 in the defeat of Germany. Certainly, the British felt the pressure, but the Americans felt it more since Roosevelt had been promising the Soviets a cross-Channel invasion both diplomatically and publicly. (5:55)

The British position was clear and included the wearing down of the Germans in Europe to insure the success of a cross-Channel invasion which would have to come later. (9:270) One might easily argue this position was at the expense of the Russians, who had in effect put the Germans on the defensive by defeating them at Stalingrad in January 1943. (9:269; 8:293) Still, the British were

not convinced that the Germans were sufficiently weakened and continued to favor further operations in the Mediterranean. (9:270) There was also some additional hope that these operations in the south would help convince Turkey to join the Allied cause. (9:270) In a letter dated 13 June 1943, Churchill asked Roosevelt to review a draft response to a recent Stalin telegram which again pressured for a second Allied front in Europe. The following part of the proposed letter to Stalin gives a good summary of British strategy just prior to the Sicilian Campaign:

> I quite understand your disappointment but I am sure we are doing not only the right thing but the only thing that is physically possible in the circumstances. It would be no help to Russia if we throw away a hundred thousand men in a disastrous cross-channel attack such as would, in my opinion, certainly occur if we tried under present conditions and with forces too weak to exploit any success that might be gained at very heavy cost. In my view and that of all my expert military advisors, we should, oven if we got ashore, be driven into the sea, as the Germans have forces already in France superior to any we could put there this year, and can reinforce far more quickly across the main lateral railways of Europe than we could do over the beaches or through any of the destroyed channel ports we might seize. I cannot see how a great British defeat and slaughter would aid the Soviet armies. It might, however, cause the utmost ill feeling here if it were thought it had been incurred against the advice of our military experts and under pressure from you. You will remember that I have always made it clear in my telegrams to you that I would never authorize any cross-channel attack which I believed would lead only to useless massacre.
>
> The best way for us to help you is by winning battles [i.e.Sicily] and not by losing them. If we can knock Italy out of the war this year, as is my earnest and sober hope, we shall draw far more Germans off your front than by any other means open. (9:342)

Clearly, the differences between the American and British strategies in World War II were in conflict prior to the campaign in Sicily. The British were cautious in their plans for defeating

Nazi Germany, while the Americans wanted to take the fight to the enemy immediately, no matter the risk. These strategic differences are summarized below:

> In the view of the British, American eyes were so firmly fixed on the ultimate objective that they overlooked most of the problems of actually getting there - the basic but unprecedented logistical difficulties of landing and deploying large forces on an enemy-held land mass. They also considered that the Americans underestimated the necessity, which they themselves had learned the hard way in Norway, Belgium and Greece, of engaging the Wehrmacht only in the most favourable circumstances possible; in particular with an overwhelming local superiority of force and with command of the air. In return, the Americans considered the British strategy to be indecisive and peripheral, haunted by memories of the slaughters in the First World War, and of early defeats in the Second. They doubted whether Britain's military leaders, even Churchill himself, staunch as they were in defense, were prepared to make the sacrifices necessary for a victorious attack;... (7:22-23)

Despite being filled with controversy, the Casablanca Conference finally brought Allied agreement to invade Sicily. (9:270) The principle conference participants were Churchill, Roosevelt, Marshall, Brooke, and Eisenhower. Stalin had been invited but declined due to his responsibilities on the Eastern Front. (9:270) According to Patton, who hosted the event, the principle conference goals were to answer:

> After that [Tunisian campaign], what was to be done? ... Should they [the Allies] continue their efforts in the Mediterranean area or launch a cross-Channel invasion?... How was the war on the European side of the conflict to be related to military endeavors elsewhere? [the Pacific and war with Japan] How should the available resources in men and material be allocated among the various theaters of operation? (2:152)

After long and detailed discussions, the British "Soft Underbelly" strategy was agreed to by the Americans as Churchill eloquently argued its advantages over a cross-Channel invasion. (4:231)

He convinced Roosevelt that further buildup of men and materials in England was critical to success in a cross-Channel assault. (12:307) The shortage of Allied shipping was also a key argument put forth by Churchill that prevented a cross-Channel invasion in 1943. (9:320) British success at Casablanca can be explained further by their strength in negotiation. General Wedemeyer, a senior officer on Marshall's staff, described British success in negotiation as follows:

> The British were masters in negotiation...when matters of state were involved, our British opposite numbers had elastic scruples. What I witnessed was the British power of finesse in its finest hour, a power that had been developed over centuries of successful international intrigue... (7:25)

What the British won in negotiation at Casablanca was "The Mediterranean Strategy", described by Michael Howard in the book by the same title as:

> ...one not of maneuvre, but of attrition. The Combined Chiefs of Staff agreed that the Mediterranean should be fully opened in order to release shipping resources, and to provide bases from which Allied bombers could attack new areas of the German-controlled economy. They agreed that operations should be continued to distract German strength from the Russian front, to wear down the German war machine in general, and in particular to force the collapse of Italy. They agreed on the invasion of Sicily, as the measure most likely to fulfill all these objectives; but beyond that no plans were made....It was assumed, with good reason, that once the Mediterranean had been opened and Sicily taken and perhaps Sardinia and Corsica as well - the weight of Allied sea and air power would be enough in themselves to force an Italian collapse. This would compel the Germans to take over not only the Italian mainland but also the extensive Italian committments in the Balkan peninsula and the Aegean. The whole Mediterranean would be turned into 'a heavy liability' for Germany, who would be compelled to divert forces both from the Eastern front and from North-West Europe. Thus immediate help would be given to the Russians, and the way would be paved for cross-channel operations in 1944. (7:35-36)

This strategy finally gave the Allies a plan. It is curious, however, that no decision was made as to what would be next, after Sicily. In fact, this decision would be delayed for approximately seven months and not made until "Husky" was already in progress. Although not part of the original agenda for Casablanca, this failure of the Allies to look past Sicily sacrificed valuable planning time for subsequent operations. (7:40; 11:171) As Montgomery wrote:

> There should have been a master plan [at Casablanca] which embraced the capture of Sicily and the use of the island as a spring-board for getting quickly across to Italy [eventually determined to be the next target after Sicily], and exploiting success.
>
> We proposed to invade the mainland of Europe without any clear idea how operations were to be developed once we got there. (11:171)

There were two more conferences in 1943 where Churchill and Roosevelt refined Allied strategy. In May, the "Trident" Conference resulted in the decision to attack Western Europe across the Channel in May 1944. (9:272) On July 25, 1943, while the battle in Sicily was still raging, the two leaders met again at the "Quandrant" Conference. In addition to discussions pertaining to the war with Japan, they finally agreed on the invasion of the Italian mainland. Only a few days later, the first Allied troops landed on the toe of the Italian peninsula. (9:273)

PLANNING ENVIRONMENT

The success of battle depends in large degree on two key elements, planning and execution. A poor plan can be as disasterous in war, as can poor leadership. A study of the planning for the Sicily invasion introduces many of the inefficiencies of combined

operations. A campaign of many firsts in modern warfare, Sicily provides many "How to", as well as "How not to" lessons in combined operations. Providing an effective training base for the later Allied cross-Channel invasion, Sicily was an invaluable opportunity to practice combined operations on the battlefield. (10:104) The individual personalities, leadership characteristics, prejudices, and political affiliations of the principle Allied military leaders are fascinating in their effect upon successful combined operations. These idiosyncrasies and general lessons in combined operations can be grasped clearly in a study of invasion planning for the Sicilian Campaign. Such a study also forms the basis for the who, what, when, where, and general outcome aspects of a detailed campaign chronology.

Patton's planning views and actions were influenced by a general mistrust of the British and a resultant obsession to make himself and the American soldier look good in the eyes of the public. He worked toward achieving his own objectives and personal glory even if it meant the sacrifice of logical war planning and teamwork. Quotes from Patton's diary provide direct evidence of his aversion toward the British, and lack of cooperative spirit necessary in combined and joint operations. Referring to the plans for "Husky" as of 20 April 1943, he wrote:

> So far, the invasion is pretty confused in my mind,...
> As usual, the Navy and the Air are not lined up. Of course, being connected with the British is bad. So far, this war is being fought for the benefit of the British Empire and for post-war considerations. No one gives a damn about winning it for itself, now. No one busts a gut to get as many men as possible in. They talk about supply difficulties. (2:229)

On 28 April 1943, Patton was in Oran visiting General McNair, who had been wounded in Tunesia. McNair asked Patton what he thought about combined command. Patton said, "It will not work. Allies must fight in separate theaters or they hate each other more than they do the enemy." (2:234) Another diary entry provides a good summary of Patton's attitude towards combined operations by showing Patton's obsession with besting the British. On 22 May, Patton wrote:

> Under the present arrangement for Husky, we have a pro-British straw-man at the top [Eisenhower], a British chief admiral and senior vice admiral, Cunningham and Ramsey. This makes our Admiral Hewitt [British Naval Officer in charge of support for Patton's 7th Army] third. Tedder [British] controls the air with Spaatz [American], a straw-man, under him...Conyngham [British] commands the tactical air force and the close support air force by another British vice air marshal. Our close support [for 7th Army] air force is commanded by a Colonel. Browning is an airborne advisor [to Eisenhower] and trying to get command of the paratroops.
>
> Alexander [British] commands all the ground troops. His chief of staff is British, but we have a Director of Operations in Brigadier General Nevins and a Deputy Chief of Staff in Major General Huebner, which may help. General Montgomery, a full general, commands [Eighth Army]. I command - a poor last.
>
> I cannot see how people at home don't see it. The U.S. is getting gypped. All Seventh Army supplies come either over the beaches or else through Syracuse, a British port, and I am told to arrange with Monty as to amounts [I will get]. Only an act of God or an accident can give us [the U.S. Army] a run for our money. On a study of form, especially in higher command, we are licked. Churchill runs this war and at the moment he is not interested in Husky.
>
> The thing I must do is to retain my self-confidence. I have greater ability than these other people and it comes from, for lack of a better word, what we must call greatness of soul based on a belief - an unshakable belief - in my destiny. The U.S. must win - not as an ally, but as a conqueror. If I can find my duty, I can do it. I must. (2:254)

Patton's abrasive attitude toward the British contributed to a disjointed planning environment.

There were other problems that contributed to this disjointed Allied planning environment. Montgomery reviews some of these problems in the following remarks. These remarks provide contemporary leader insight into potential bottlenecks in combined operational planning:

> The detailed order of battle was a nightmare because it was not known until the end of the North African Campaign [May-June 1943] which divisions would in fact emerge in sufficient strength and condition to be ready for Sicily in the time available [July invasion]. The planning of the assault was subject to the availability of various types of assault craft and ships, a factor which constantly changed up to the very last minute: with the inevitable repercussions on the planning of the units and formations concerned. Not the least of the difficulties arose from relatively minor matters..., which resulted in seemingly endless misunderstandings, when staff work was being handled over such immense distances.
>
> In the wider aspect for planning for the whole Task Force, the main difficulty was the separation of the Navy and Army staffs from their Air Force counterpart. The air forces were represented in Cairo by a laison staff provided from North Africa, but the Air Force Command immediately concerned with our activities was in Malta. It was therefore impossible to plan in close contact with the actual air staff with which the battle was to be conducted at the Task Force Level. (10:84-85)

The establishment of several major planning headquarters separated by great distances also contributed to a disjointed planning environment. (10:84) Seventh Army headquarters was in Mostaganem, Eighth Army in Cairo, while the Fifteenth Army Group and Allied Headquarters were located in Algiers. (2:234) Communication between the headquarters was often untimely, misinterpreted, and lacked cooperative spirit. (10:84) Another problem was that two of the principal planners, Alexander and Montgomery, were still involved in North African battle. Therefore, substitute planners often acted in an information and command guidance vacuum. (10:81)

Still, this combined operational planning was the first of its type in World War II. It provided invaluable lessons for later operations. (10:104)

HUSKY PLANNING

The original plan that surfaced from this disjointed environment called for a Western Task Force (American) landing near Palermo while the Eastern Task Force (British) would land near Catania, Syracuse, and Licata (see figure 2). The seizure of the principal ports and nearby airfields and subsequent march by both forces to Messina was viewed as the most efficient way to subdue the island quickly and minimize Axis escape across the Straits of Messina. (2:234; 5:96; 4:265) The Allies considered a direct assault on Messina too hazardous since it was heavily fortified and out of range of Allied fighters. (1:105)

Though still engaged in Tunesia, Montgomery was anxious to finalize planning for "Husky" and was periodically briefed by General Leese, who headed his planning staff in Cairo. After hearing of the plan, Montgomery objected to the dispersion of the assaulting armies and initiated "the Famous Meeting", as Patton called it. (4:268; 2:235) After scheduling, Montgomery became ill and Leese attended as his representative. According to Patton's diary, Alexander opened the 29 April 1943 meeting by stating that the reason for the gathering was to hear Montgomery's concerns of the invasion plan. Leese then explained Montgomery's objections as twofold. First, Montgomery objected to splitting his forces, which would be necessary if he were to neutralize the

important airfields near Licata. He insisted that his units must mutually support one another during landings on hostile beaches. Second, if he were forced to undertake such an operation, his forces would be too dispersed and therefore unable to hold the airfields once captured. (2:235)

Montgomery suggested an alternate plan that called for the concentration of his entire Army near Syracuse, and subsequent march north to Messina. Both Air Chief Marshall Tedder and Admiral Cunningham objected to this plan calling it tactically and logistically unsound. Tedder pointed out that success without the security of the airfields near Lacata was impossible, as air superiority would thus be sacrificed and jeopardize both the landings and subsequent inland operations. Cunningham objected on the basis that concentration of shipping at Syracuse would not only slow landings, but concentrate naval targets for enemy aircraft attack. (2:235)

Alexander, for his part, constantly gave his philosophy that the final plan must favor what the ground commander wants. Giving no justification for his view, he was generally indecisive. (2:235) The meeting at an impasse, Alexander recommended that the Prime Minister be contacted for his thoughts. Cunningham then suggested that Eisenhower be contacted instead, since, after all, he was the Commander-in-Chief. The meeting ended without a decision. (2:236)

This meeting for the planning of the campaign underscored the overall lack of unity among the participants. Patton showed his frustration with the planning process by referring to this meeting in a letter to his wife: "It ended in stalemate. It was one hell

of a performance. War by committee." Patton was unimpressed with Alexander's indecisiveness in command. (2:237)

A follow-up meeting at Eisenhower's headquarters in Algiers on 3 May resulted in the acceptance of Montgomery's plan. It was decided to land Patton's Army on the southern coast near Scoglitti and Gela (see figure 3). (4:272) Patton felt this plan's acceptance was on political rather than military grounds. Since Montgomery and Churchill had such a close personal relationship, Montgomery seemed to have considerable influence over both Eisenhower and Alexander. Patton put his view of the change of plan in simple terms in his diary entry of 10 May by stating: "...The plan changed because Monty would not play ball and the big brave wolf [a sarcastic reference to Eisenhower] would not say no..." (2:248) In this instance, Eisenhower decided in Montgomery's favor, even though his air and naval force commanders labeled the plan unsound both tactically and logistically.

So now after months of disjointed planning and with less than two months remaining before the invasion, the Allies put together a general tactical plan. Montgomery described the plan as follows (see figure 3):

> The operation was to be conducted in five phases; first, the preparatory measures by Naval and Air Forces to neutralize enemy naval efforts and to gain air supremacy; second, the seaborne assault, assisted by airborne landings, with the object of seizing airfields and the ports of Siracusa and Licata; third, the establishment of a firm base from which to conduct operations for the capture of the ports of Augusta and Catania and the airfields in the Plain of Catania; fourth, the capture of these ports and airfields; finally, the reduction of the island. Eighth Army's task was to assault between Siracusa and the airfield at Pachino. We were then to advance to the general line Siracusa-Palazzolo-

> Ragusa, making contact at Ragusa with Seventh United States Army. Subsequently we were to secure Augusta and Catania and the group of airfields in the Plain of Catania, then complete the capture of the island in conjunction with the Americans. General Patton's Seventh Army was to assault between Capo Scaramia and Licata with the object of capturing the port of Licata and the group of airfields which included Ponte Olivo, Biscari, and Comiso. Seventh Army was to ensure the defense of the airfields and subsequently was to protect the left flank of Eighth Army from any enemy threats developed from the west of the island. (10:85)

It is curious that how the island was to be reduced was not planned. (2:267) Each army was given broad nonspecific objectives without mutually supportive contingency plans.

CAMPAIGN CHRONOLOGY

The reduction of Axis airpower and naval diversions in the Mediterranean prefaced the Allied invasion of Sicily. In the month prior to the landings, Allied air raids were directed at Axis airfields. They were successful in reducing Axis aircraft in the area to 1400, compared to 3680 for the Allies. (3:90) Axis airfields on the islands south of Sicily were among those destroyed, as Pantelleria, Linosa, and Lampedusa were captured by amphibious assault (see figure 2). Additionally, naval diversions toward western Sicily and Greece were aimed at minimizing Axis resistance to the planned beach assaults in southern Sicily. (3:90) With air superiority established and intelligence showing Axis dispositions mainly inland, near Caltagirone, the stage was set for the invasion on July 10, 1943.

Axis forces on Sicily consisted of the Italian Sixth Army, under General Guzzoni. The army consisted of six Italian and two German divisions. (2:275) These divisions comprised the

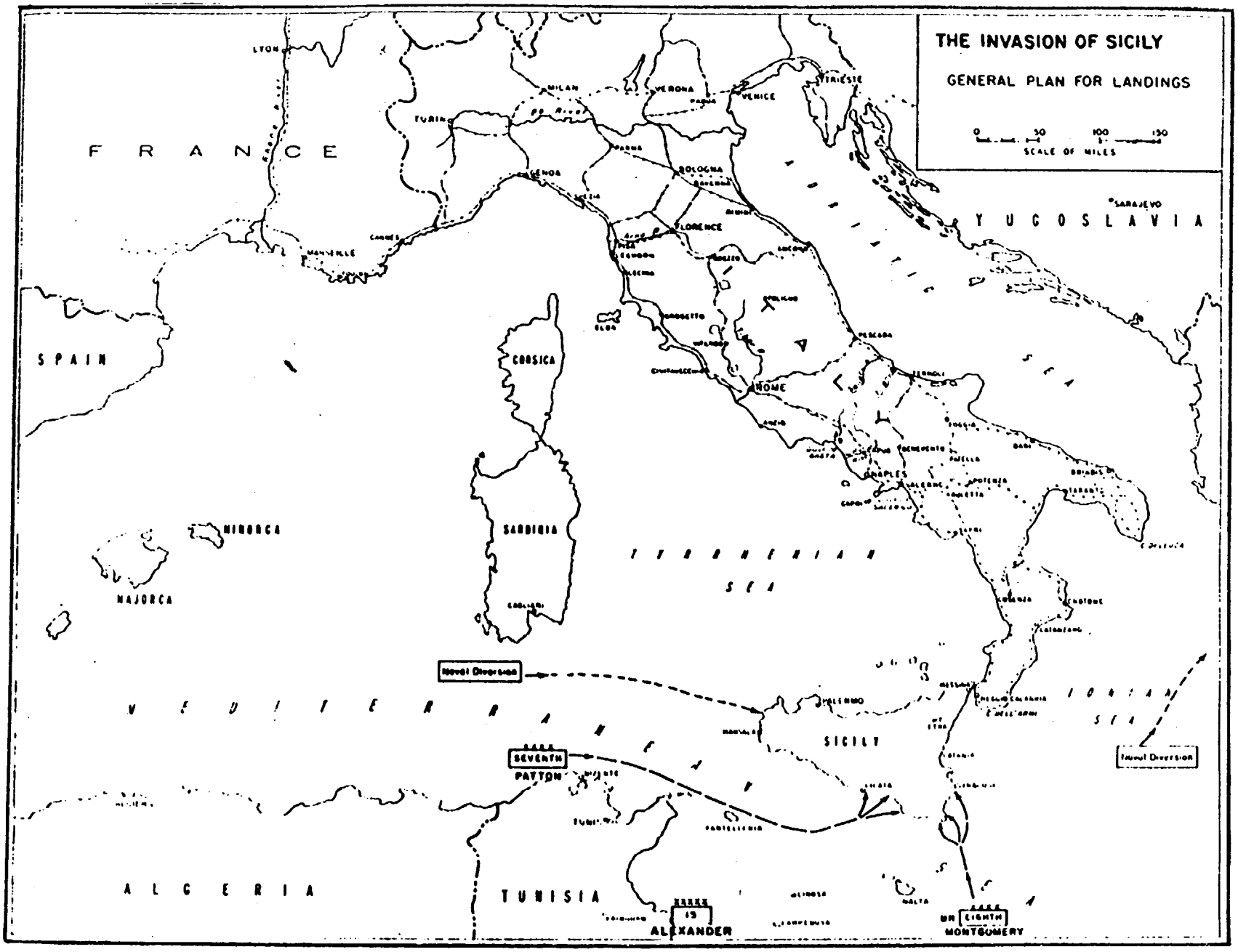

Figure 2. The Area of Operations. (3:89)

main combat power of Axis forces in Sicily, as the several Italian Coastal Divisions were much less mobile, poorly supplied, and lacked morale. Altogether Axis troop strength on D-Day was close to 300,000, while the Allies eventually brought 478,000 ashore. (3:90; 6:437) Disposition of enemy units on 10 July were as shown at figure 3.

On their way to Sicily on 9 July from their staging areas in North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean, the two Allied fleets confronted stormy seas which resulted in shipping going off course and threatened to delay the invasion. (3:91) Finally, the weather moderated and by 0430 hours in the morning of 10 July the two armies (Patton's Seventh on the left and Montgomery's Eighth on the right) landed on the southern coastline of Sicily. (6:437) Fighting token resistence that first day, the two Allied armies established their beachheads as planned and neutralized the port cities of Licata and Syracuse (see dashed lines at figure 4). (3:91)

However, the airborne assaults were disappointing since the mission aircraft were blown off course and the paratroopers became scattered all over the southeastern part of the island with some even landing in the sea. (6:439) Despite this catastrophic operation, some members of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment and the British 1st Airborne Division managed to consolidate forces and were able to secure inland key terrain and create obstacles effective in the delay of German counterattacks. (3:91) These delays were important in allowing the Allies additional time to consolidate their beachheads in preparation for inland operations. (1:107)

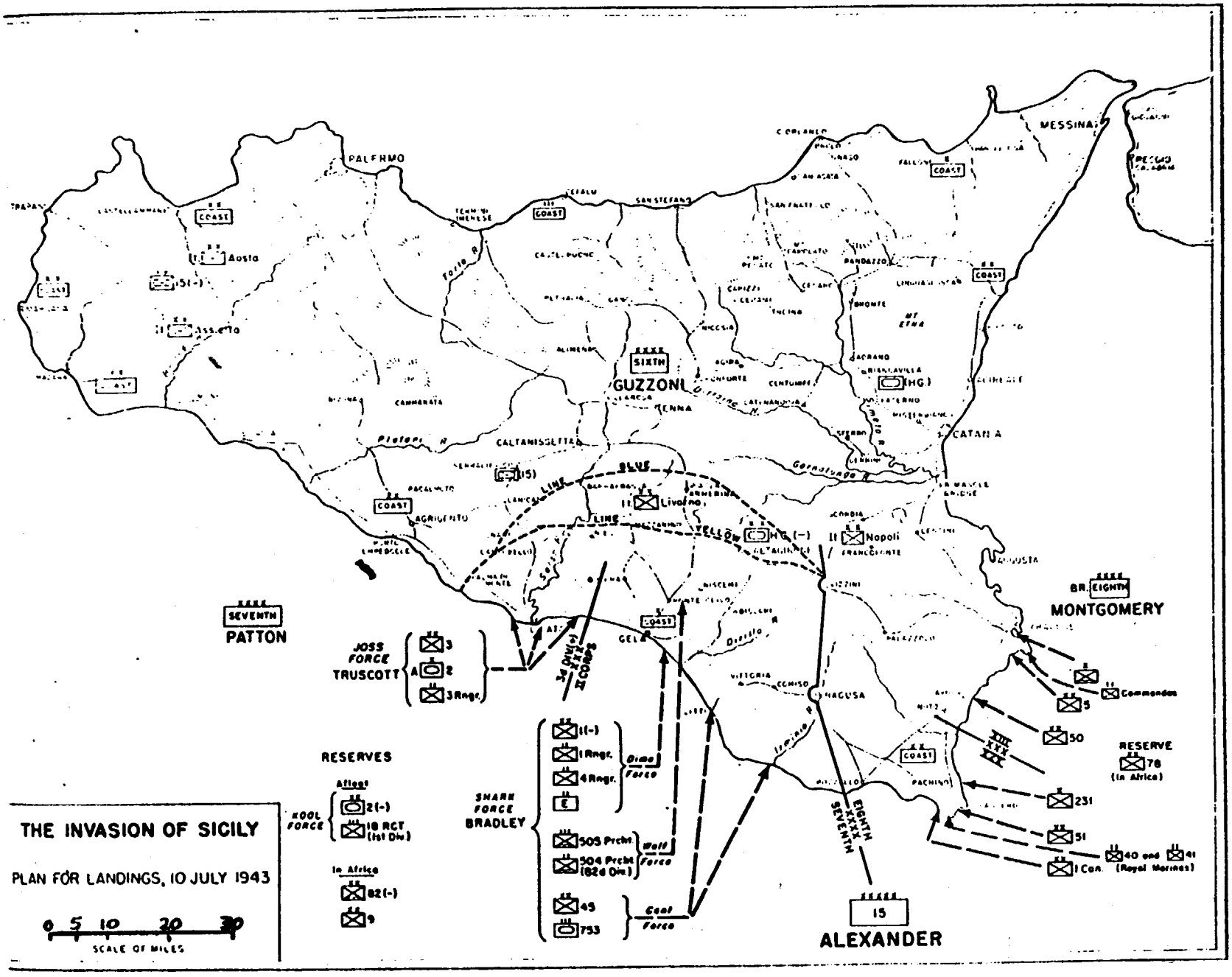

Figure 3. Sicily - Unit Dispositions. (3:90)

Counterattacking Patton's army at Gela on 11 July, the Italian Livorno and German Panzer Divisions were eventually turned back by the combined efforts of fierce tank clashes, innovative infantry maneuver, and accurate Allied naval bombardment. (3:91; 6:439) Although American casualties were high, this defeat resulted in Axis realization that Sicily could not be defended against such overwhelming force. Therefore, the Germans decided to concentrate their forces in the Catania Plain. Their aim was to deny Messina to the Allies as long as possible, and thereby gain time for the buildup of forces on the Italian mainland. (3:91; 2:283) This early change in Axis strategy was brilliantly executed and formed the basis for the German escape across the Straits of Messina. Concluding that the Italian divisions were of little use in the planned delaying strategy, Hitler sent two more divisions to Sicily, the 1st Parachute and the 29th Panzer Grenadier. (3:91; 2:280) This reinforcement brought total German divisions to four compared to twelve for the Allies. (6:439)

Because of the consolidation of Axis forces in the east and the change in Axis military strategy, the Allied armies were able to march inland with only token resistance (see 15 July line at figure 4). The march northward allowed the capture of several key airfields, thus lessening an already frail Axis air capability. (3:91) Italian soldiers surrendered by the thousands with nearly eleven thousand prisoners taken in the first twenty-four hours. (5:97) As a result of these early Allied advances, General Alexander announced his plan for the reduction of the island. The

British Eighth Army was to march north to Messina, while the American Seventh was to protect Montgomery's left flank and march north to cut the island in two. Subsequently, Patton was to clear all of western Sicily of remaining Axis forces. (3:92)

The German consolidation in the Catania Plain area proved formidable after 15 July. (3:92; 6:439) After several attempts to break through German defenses, Montgomery convinced Alexander that his Army's sector should be expanded to allow additional maneuver area to the west. Over the objections of Patton, Alexander gave Montgomery the road originally reserved for the American 45th Division, which connected Caltagirone and Piazza Armerina (see figure 4). (3:92) This forced General Bradley, II Corps Commander, to direct the 45th Division to march westward across rough terrain. Resultantly, the American II Corps was restricted in its movement northward. This raised further consternation by both Patton and Bradley, who viewed the whole affair as politically motivated. (2:284-285)

Not to be denied an active role in the defeat of Axis forces on Sicily, Patton obtained permission from Alexander to attack further to the west. After the capture of Agrigento and the port city of Porto Empedocle on 17 July, Patton's Provisional Corps, under the command of General Keyes, captured Palermo on 22 July (see figure 5). (2:285-287) Although negotiating extremely rough terrain, General Keyes' divisions were able to overrun western Sicily without encountering significant Axis resistance. (3:92; 6:439) In only four days, the 3rd Infantry Division, under General Truscott,

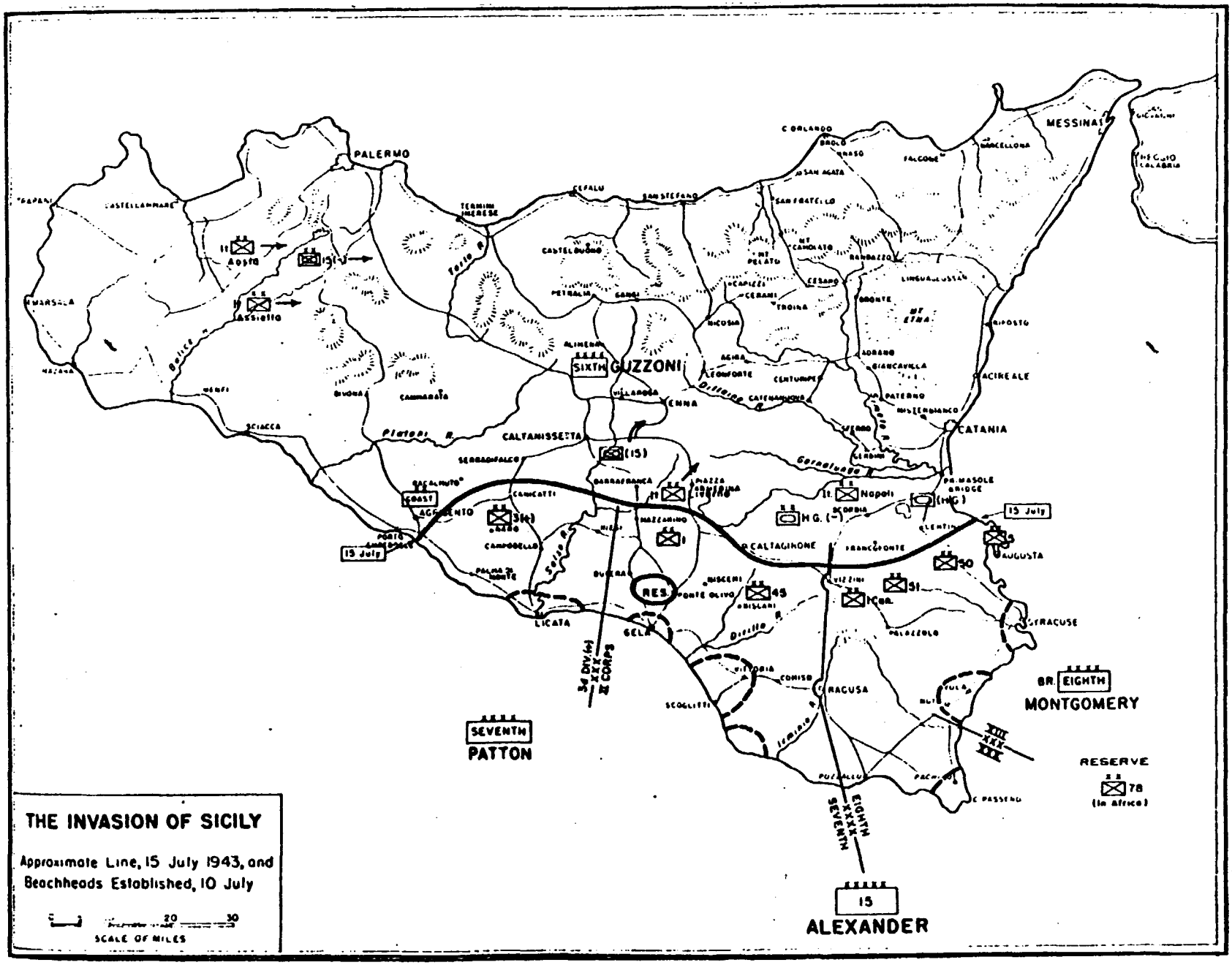

Figure 4. Battle Lines - 15 July 1943. (3:91)

marched 100 miles to Palermo (see figure 5). The 82nd Airborne and 2nd Armored divisions operating further west captured thousands of Italians who surrendered in droves in the face of the "blitzkrieg" like march of the Americans. (2:297; 3:92) The fall of Palermo sent "shock waves" throughout the German and Italian high command. Three days later, Mussolini was ousted from power. (2:303) Meanwhile, the American 45th Division marched northward and by 23 July had, in effect, cut the island in two by capturing Termini Imerese (see figure 5). However, the First Division was having a rough time breaking through enemy defenses which were gaining strength near Enna (see figure 5) (3:92)

Similarly, the British were having ever increasing difficulty in the east which was aggrevated by German troop consolidation and reinforcement. Repeated attempts by Montgomery to capture and hold Primasole Bridge (see figure 5), including flanking movements, all failed. Under additional pressure from Montgomery, Alexander ordered Patton's Army east toward Messina. The goal was to relieve German pressure on the Eighth Army and allow the British further maneuver space around Mount Etna. (3:92) Without delay, Patton's Army successfully pushed eastward. Although negotiating some of the roughest terrain in Sicily, it advanced to the line San Stefano-Capizzi-Cerami by 2 August (see figure 6). (3:93) Meanwhile, the British 51st and 5th Divisions, now aided with the newly arrived 78th Division, were successful in pushing the Germans back a short distance to the Simento river (see figure 6). (3:93)

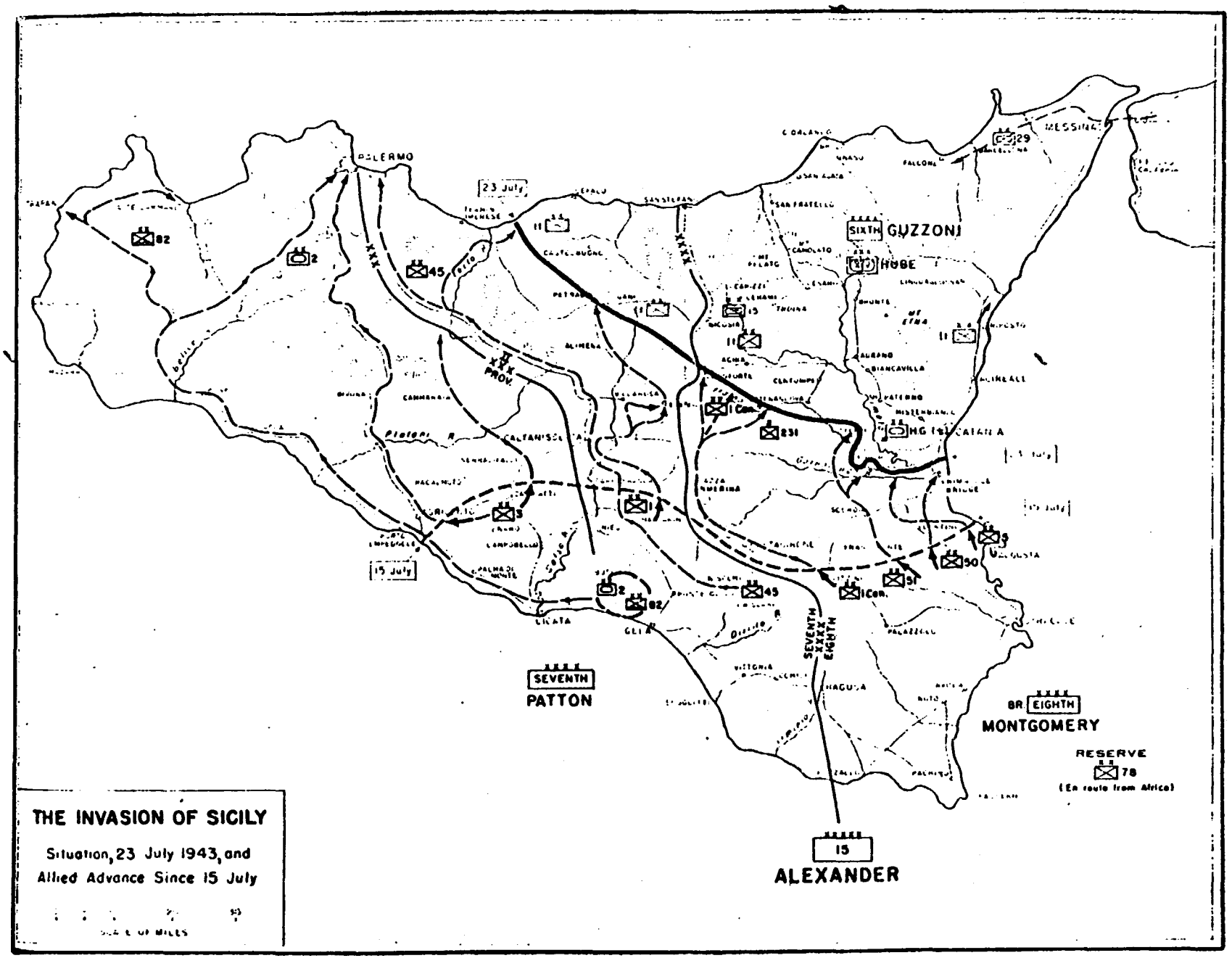

Figure 5. Battle Lines - 23 July 1943. (3:92)

The stage was now set for the long planned delaying action on the part of the Axis forces. The plan called for delaying action on a line San Fratello-Troina-Bronte-Adrano (see figure 6). Because Adrano was now threatened by the British advance to the Simento River, the Germans withdrew from Catania in order to reinforce this delay line. Taking full advantage of the rugged mountainous terrain, the Germans developed defensive positions within the narrow sector, concentrating forces in depth to allow the Italians to escape across the Messina Straits (see figure 6). The German use of the natural terrain coupled with deployed engineer obstacles made their defenses formidable. (3:93)

During the period 3 August to 17 August, the two Allied armies were unable to penetrate German defenses. Although moving closer to Messina, Allied progress was extremely slow. Even the amphibian envelopments were unsuccessful, as the Germans skillfully withdrew ahead of Allied beach landings (see figure 6). (3:93) Using the terrain well, the German line of defense became narrower and thus more effective as their retrograde moved closer to Messina. (6:439) When elements of Patton's 7th Army entered Messina on 17 August, the Germans had escaped to the Italian mainland. This left some doubt as to who were the real victors in Sicily. Through skillful execution of delaying tactics, the Axis forces escaped with 110,000 troops, 10,000 vehicles, 47 tanks, 200 artillery guns, 1,000 tons of fuel, and more than 15,000 tons of miscellaneous small arms and equipment. (2:323) Later, on the Italian mainland, the Allies would pay for allowing the Axis escape.

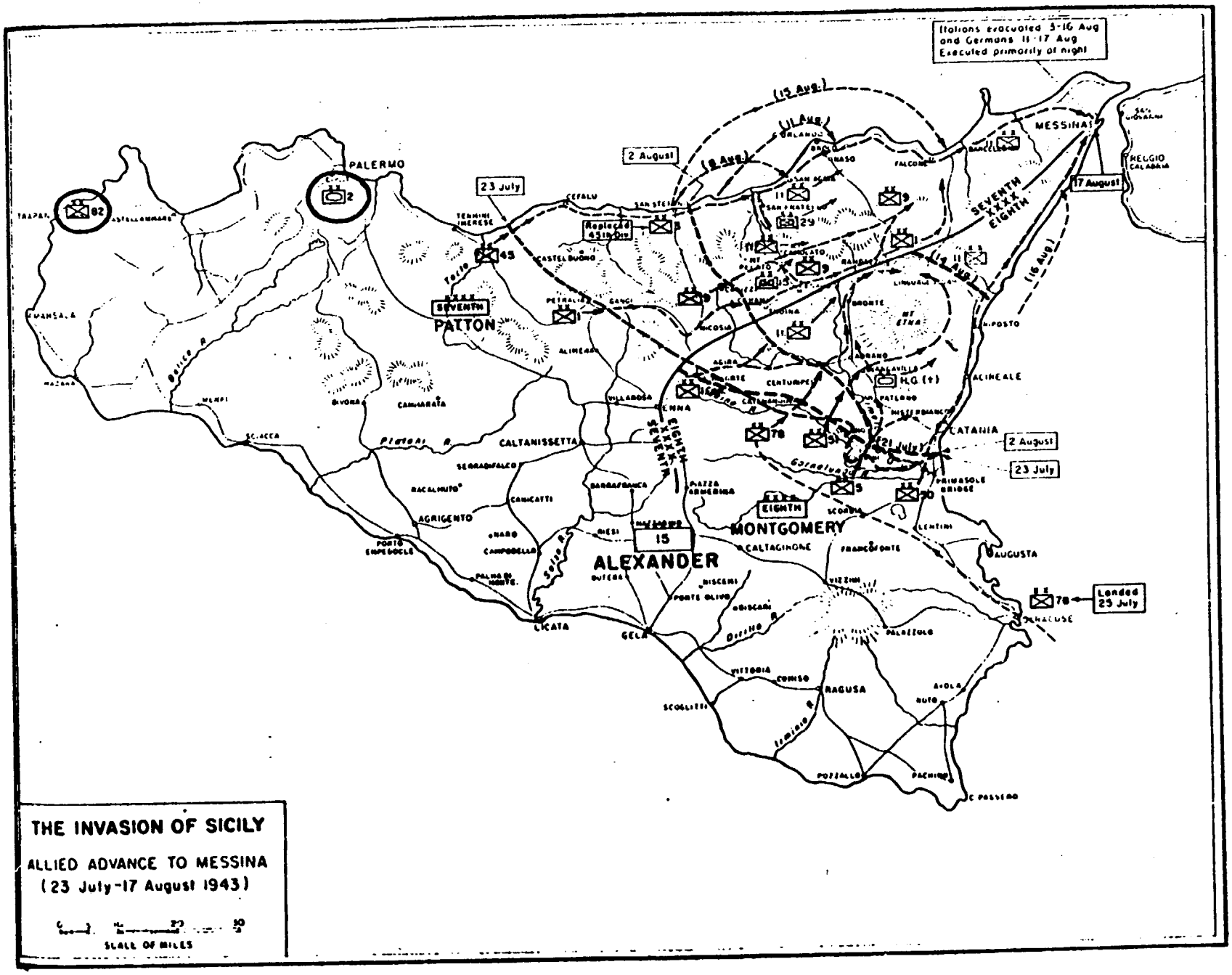

Figure 6. Battle Lines - August 1943. (3:93)

CRITICAL ASPECTS

Preinvasion planning for the employment of invasion forces was inadequate. This contributed to the German success in escaping across the Straits of Messina to Italy. The planning that did transpire was oriented on the landing, not battle strategy to subdue the island and destroy the enemy. Allowing Patton to drive northwest to Palermo split the two armies. This prevented the possible envelopment, through maneuver, of the concentrated Axis threat in the vicinity of Catania. Instead of taking advantage of the superiority of the combined armies and proven rapid mobility of Patton's army, Alexander allowed the two Army commanders to pursue their own operational objectives. Precipitated by the lack of planning, the race to Messina was soon on, and resulted in the splitting of Allied forces, the delaying tactics by the Germans, and the eventual escape of the Germans to the mainland. Montgomery's plan, originally accepted at the 3 May meeting, called for a mutually supportive drive by the two armies to the heart of the island. Montgomery writes in his memoirs:

> The two armies, landing side by side on the South coast, should push quickly northwards and cut the island in half. A defensive flank should then be formed facing west, and the combined efforts of both armies be concentrated on getting rapidly to Messina to prevent the get-away across the straits. The navies and air forces must co-operate to see that none of the enemy get away by sea. Although Alexander then agreed with this conception of how the campaign should be developed by his two armies, and with the role of the naval and air forces, in fact the campaign was not conducted in this way. By the time we had captured the whole island, the Germans had mostly got back to Italy. (11:164)

The problem was that although these important objectives were discussed even prior to the invasion, they were never acted on through military orders. Resultantly, the Germans escaped with significant combat power despite Allied superiority on the land, sea, and in the air.

Alexander's order for Patton to give up the Caltagirone-Piazza Road to Montgomery, which essentially changed Army boundaries, certainly contributed to Patton's concentration on Palermo. Patton viewed the decision as political, which heightened his obsession with the conquest of western Sicily. Shifting the boundaries and giving the road to the Eighth Army disgusted both Patton and Bradley. In a letter to his wife on 19 July 1943, Patton wrote:

> I think that the British have the bear by the tail in the Messina peninsula and we may have to go in and help. Had they let us...take Caltagirone and Enna ourselves [not taken the road away], instead of waiting for them, we would have saved two days and been on the north coast now. Alex has no idea of either the power or speed of American armies. We can go twice as fast as the British and hit harder, but to save British prestige, the XXX Corps had to make the envelopment [on the road in question], and now I think they are stuck. (2:293-294)

If Alexander had not given the Eighth Army the Caltagirone Road, the Allies probably would have cut the island in two a few days earlier than 23 July. This would have trapped some Axis forces to the west, therefore minimizing the concentration of Axis delaying forces in the east and lessening their retrograde to the Italian mainland.

Despite the negative considerations discussed above, there were some positive aspects of the campaign that were critical to the success enjoyed by the Allies both in Sicily and later in

Europe. First, the success of a large scale amphibian operation, such as Sicily, proved the Allied dominance in air and sea power while emphasizing recent technological innovations. The ability to strike with surprise anywhere within the Mediterranean in conjunction with preparatory air and naval bombardment, gave the Allies a distinct advantage over Axis forces. Sicily provided a test of this capability, which included new amphibian techniques and equipment. Frogman, DUKWS (specially designed landing craft), Airborne troops, naval gunfire, and new communication systems were employed for the first time in a large scale amphibian operation. This provided invaluable learning experiences that later became important in the Normandy invasion. (4:306-307) On this subject, Montgomery wrote:

> Sicily...marked the opening of a new phase in the war and for the first time we tackled a combined operation involving a large scale assault on a hostile and defended coast. The experience gained in Sicily was to prove most valuable in solving the administration problems of the subsequent campaigns in Italy and Normandy. The invasion of Sicily was the first occasion in this war in which large forces had been maintained over open beaches for a considerable period....given adequate resources in landing craft and specialized equipment and reasonably favourable conditions of tide and weather. (10:104)

In a letter written to the War Department on 2 August 1943, while fierce fighting was being waged near Messina, Patton puts the new found amphibian capabilities in simple terms:

> Some of the really important factors in successful war are not mentioned because they are so obvious, so I am taking this occasion to tell you what a wonderful thing you did in providing us with the DUKWS... DUKWS permitted a strategic surprise, because no one unacquainted with the capabilities of the DUKWS - and the Germans were unacquainted - could have visualized

> a successful landing on the south coast where this Army landed... (2:309-310)

Both Montgomery and Patton, who during the planning for Sicily were skeptical of the amphibian support of armies, were now convinced that the new found Logistics Over The Shore (LOTS) capabilities of Allied forces were critical to the defeat of the Nazis.

Secondly, the Sicily experiment in combined operations set the stage for overall Allied cooperation in World War II. Bringing together diverse peoples to wage war who have varying strategies, tactics, political objectives, and personalities is not a small task. In a sense, the military leadership necessary for cohesion within this environment must be more than the traditional "Follow - Me" approach. Allied leaders had to be statesmen and team players that solve problems. They had to negotiate differences in order that the alliance might be continually strengthened. Eisenhower, as Supreme Allied Commander, was such a leader. He had the ability to encourage the aggressiveness of subordinate Allied commanders, while satisfying the political motivations of Roosevelt, Churchill, Marshall, and Brooke. Montgomery wrote in his memoirs of Eisenhower's leadership:

> The reader will have noted that we [Eisenhower and Montgomery] did not always agree about the strategy and tactics of the war in which we were engaged. But history will do no harm in talking about the honest differences of opinion between us, provided, as in our case was the fact, it does so under the shadow of the great truth that Allied co-operation in Europe during the Second World War was brought to the greatest heights it has ever attained. Although it may be true to say that no man could have been responsible for such an achievement, the major share of the credit goes to Eisenhower - without any doubt. I would not class Ike as a great soldier in the true sense of the word. But

> he was a great Supreme Commander - a military statesman. I know of no other person who could have welded the Allied forces into such a fine fighting machine in the way he did, and kept a balance amoung the many conflicting and disturbing elements which threatened at times to wreck the ship. (11:483-484)

Under Eisenhower's leadership, the Allies successfully tested large scale combined operations in Sicily. The experience gained in this experiment contributed to Allied readiness for Normandy.

CAMPAIGN RESULTS

Merely comparing casualties provides little evidence of the true impact of the Sicily campaign on the continued warfighting capability of the opposing combatants. Axis casualties numbered 25,500 compared to 19,245 for the Allies. (6:440) A more detailed analysis shows that of Axis casualties, 18,500 were wounded, with the majority being evacuated to the Italian mainland. (6:440) The fact that these wounded were among the 110,000 Axis troops that escaped to Italy significantly diminishes the overall impact of the Allied victory. Together with thousands of tons of evacuated military hardware, German divisions escaped intact and ready to fight on the Italian mainland. The brilliant retrograde of combat capability by the Germans across the Straits of Messina denied the Allies total military victory.

While the Germans had tactical success even in retrograde, their losses proved crucial to the eventual collapse of Nazi Germany. Certainly, the elimination of the Italian alliance, as a result of Sicily, weakened still further Hitler's already precarious position. (8:300) The "blitzkrieg" like march of Patton's Army through western Sicily, the fall of Palermo, and the eventual

capture of 137,000 Italians in Sicily was too much for Italy. The ouster of Mussolini, that followed in late July, climaxed a series of Axis misfortunes that occurred in late 1942 and 1943. Recent successes by the Russians on the Eastern Front combined with Allied victories in North Africa and Sicily dispersed German forces, and soon put Hitler on the defensive. Hitler was not only threatened from the east, but now his immediate concern lay to the south and west. (13:141-148) One of the main Allied objectives for the invasion of Sicily as agreed to at Casablanca was to relieve German pressure on the Eastern Front. This objective was obviously met when Hitler's War Directive Number 48, dated 26 July 1943, directed the removal of six divisions from the east to bolster southern defenses. In this directive, Hitler's concern over his Southern Command is apparent:

> The enemy's measures in the Eastern Mediterranean, in conjunction with the attack on Sicily, indicate that he will shortly begin landing operations against our strong line in the Agean, Peloponese - Crete - Rhodes, and against the west coast of Greece....Should the operations of the enemy extend from Sicily to the mainland of Southern Italy, we must also reckon with an assault on the east coast of the Adraitic, north of the straits of Otranto. Turkey's neutrality is at present beyond question, but needs continuous watching. (13:142)

No longer was Hitler dictating the course of the war. With the threat of a second front in the west now real, Hitler's strategy of conquest was suddenly muted.

The victory in Sicily, despite the German escape, reinforced Allied resolve. Psychologically, Allied leaders were elated with the victory while patriotic support at home grew. Patton won the race to Messina and finally earned the American soldier the respect

he so painstakingly sought. Churchill's objectives including the fall of Italy, relief of pressure on the Russians, and opening of the Mediterranean were, for the most part, accomplished. General Alexander wrote in his memoirs:

> The capture of Sicily gave us an important strategic advantage. It opened up the Mediterranean theatre and gave us a firm base from which to conduct further operations against southern Europe. Indeed, it heralded the surrender of Italy within little more than a fortnight. (1:108)

Montgomery's appraisel of the victory was similar:

> The Sicilian campaign had lasted thirty-eight days and had involved fierce and continuous fighting in most difficult country at the hottest season of the year. For a second time the Germans had been pushed back into the sea and we now stood at the gates of the 'Fortress of Europe'. (9:363)

Finally, even the Russians expressed their satisfaction with Allied success in Sicily. In a letter to Churchill, Stalin wrote:

> Taking this opportunity I congratulate the British Government and the Anglo-American troops on the occasion of their most successful operations in Sicily which have already caused the downfall of Mussolini and the breakup of his gang. (9:363)

As the above quotations clearly show, the Allies were satisfied that their objectives in Sicily had been accomplished. The assault against the beaches in Sicily had become but a preview of a demonstrated Allied capability that would manifest itself again on the beaches of Normandy.

Chapter Two

PRINCIPLES OF WAR

In this chapter, the Principles of War, as defined in Air Force Manual 1-1, will be used to analyze the Sicilian Campaign. Each principle will first be described by quoting directly from the manual. Examples of their application or violation during the Sicilian Campaign follow each principle.

> The principles of war represent generally accepted major truths which have been proven successful in the art and science of conducting war. Warfighting is an extremely complex activity involving differing circumstances and uncertainties. (14:2-4)

The following analysis is based on four axioms concerning the application of the Principles of War. First, the principles are interrelated. (14:2-4) The application of one principle often depends on the proper use of other principles. For example, offense means "... to act rather than react", while maneuver may be the way (or action) that offensive operations are instituted. Additionally, surprise may depend on the security and timing and tempo of a force engaged in offensive operations. Second, the principles have relevance in achievement of both strategic and tactical objectives. (14:2-4) Third, the principles are situational. The importance of their individual application therefore varies depending upon the campaign (or battle) analyzed. (14:2-4)

Fourth, although principle definitions are from an aerospace doctrinal manual, they apply to all warfighting operating mediums. (14:2-4) Commensurate with these axioms, the discussions below include both strategic and tactical examples of the principles. Examples represent both air and land mediums and are limited to those applications or violations that impacted the outcome of the campaign.

My purpose in the following analysis is twofold. First, I hope to add some clarity to the understanding of the principles of war. Second, I intend to provide some additional insight into combined operations.

OBJECTIVE

> The most basic principle for success in any military operation is a clear and concise statement of a realistic objective. The objective defines what the military action intends to accomplish and normally describes the nature and scope of an operation. An objective may vary from the overall objective of a broad military operation to the detailed objective of a specific attack. The ultimate military objective of war is to neutralize or destroy the enemy's armed forces and his will to fight. However, the intimate bond which ties war to politics cannot be ignored.
>
> ...Success in achieving objectives depends greatly on the knowledge, strategy, and leadership of the commander. The commander must ensure that assigned forces are properly used to attain the objective. This requires that objectives be disseminated and fully understood throughout all appropriate levels of command. Clear and concise statements of objectives greatly enhance the ability of subordinates to understand guidance and take appropriate actions. (14:2-4)

Allied

Strategically, the Allies had realistic objectives in the Sicilian Campaign. Three objectives were agreed upon at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943. (7:35-36) First, the Allies

sought control of the Mediterranean lines of communication. This objective was realistic because Sicily was strategically located in the heart of Mediterranean shipping lanes. Additionally, the Allies considered the capture and subsequent use of Sicilian air bases as advantageous in conducting attacks against German controlled industry. Second, the Allies wanted to force the transfer of German divisions from the Eastern Front in order to relieve pressure on the Russians. This too was realistic since Sicily would provide the Allies a European foothold in the south, from which the heart of Germany could be challenged. Sicily's capture would also threaten to break Turkish neutrality in favor of the Allies. Coupled with the direct challenge to Italy, the Allies felt these factors were likely to force German deployments away from the Eastern Front. Third, the Allies wanted to force the disintegration of the Axis alliance, by knocking Italy out of the war. (7:35-36) The realism of this objective was rooted in recent Allied successes in North Africa, which had demoralized Italian resolve. The clear statement of these realistic strategic objectives was important to Allied unity. These objectives provided the common purpose, or foundation, from which the Anglo-American alliance could conduct the first large scale combined operation of World War II.

Tactically, this principle of war was not applied effectively. Essential to proper application of objective is the "...knowledge, strategy, and leadership of the commander". (14:2-4) Under General Alexander, the two army commanders, Patton and Montgomery, never received specific orders concerning how their armies were to be employed once on the island. Montgomery's plan, which was

supposedly approved by Alexander in May 1943, was never executed. This plan called for the two armies to mutually support one another in a coordinated drive north to cut the island in two. (10:85) Subsequently, Messina would be captured to block an Axis escape route. The aim was to trap Axis forces west of Messina. (11:164) However, as soon as the Eighth Army met stiff resistance near Catania, Alexander failed to utilize the Seventh Army in a supportive role. Instead, he allowed Patton to wheel westward toward Palermo. The result was the unimpeded march east of Axis forces which reinforced their already effective defense in the Catania plain. This contributed to the eventual escape of Axis forces through Messina. Instead of concentrating on Messina as his primary objective, Alexander succumbed to the divergent secondary plans of his subordinate army commanders. Montgomery demanded the Seventh Army's Caltagirone Road be transferred to the Eighth Army so that he could break through enemy defenses utilizing flanking movements by his own divisions (see figure 4). (3:92) The last thing he wanted was to be assisted by the Americans. Patton, on the other hand, did not want his Seventh Army to have the subordinate role of protecting the Eighth Army's left flank. The last thing he wanted was to be upstaged by Montgomery. Therefore, he demanded that he be allowed to drive west to capture Palermo. (2:284-285) Alexander, who apparently could not control his army commanders, approved both requests. A more prudent approach might well have directed flanking envelopments by selected divisions of Patton's army in coordination with Montgomery. In this manner, Alexander could have maintained a coordinated drive north toward

his primary tactical objective, Messina.

The Sicilian Campaign, as the first combined large scale operation of World War II, was bound to have political and personality factors which put the British and Americans at odds in their quest for public exposure and recognition. Clearly, Patton and Montgomery were from the start in competitive, rather than supportive roles. Alexander's inability to control his two commanders demonstrates the adverse affect that poor leadership has on the proper application of this principle of war. Competitive spirit in warfighting is good. But without cohesive leadership, it can be misdirected and lead to disjointed operations void of objective.

Axis

After the invasion, the Axis objective in Sicily was to delay an expected subsequent invasion of the Italian mainland. Additionally, they wanted to maintain the flexibility of escaping through Messina. (3:91; 2:283) The Axis use of delaying tactics provides a good example of the proper application of this principle of war. Convinced that their forces would be spread too thin and face certain annihilation in any attempt to defend the entire island, the Axis powers chose to concentrate their forces in the northeast toward Messina. Utilizing delaying tactics, the Germans correctly sought to gain as much time as possible. As Hitler directed, time gained by delaying in Sicily, was to be used to reinforce German defenses in Italy. (3:91; 2:283) Having met their limited objectives in mid-August 1943, the Germans deserted the island with most of their warfighting capability still intact.

OFFENSIVE

> Unless offensive action is initiated, military victory is seldom possible. The principle of offensive is to act rather than react. The offensive enables commanders to select priorities of attack, as well as the time, place, and weaponry necessary to achieve objectives. (14:2-5)

Allied

Invasion is by its very nature offensive. Clearly, invasion is the action or execution of a planned event, not a reaction. Except for a brief period in the Catania plain, the Allies were on the offense for the entire Sicilian Campaign. The Allies chose the time and location of attack, and the forces to be utilized. From the outset, the Allied goal included the rapid overpowering of the Axis forces in Sicily. Prior to the beach landings on July 10, 1943, the Allied air offensive had already resulted in the destruction of much of Axis regional air power. Allied attacks against Axis airfields in Sicily and on surrounding islands, reduced Axis aircraft in the area to 1400, compared to 3,680 for the Allies. (3:90) This superiority in air power was critical to the success of beach landings and subsequent land operations. It was attained by the proper application of this principle of war.

In Sicilian land warfare, Patton's Seventh Army best demonstrates the application of offense. From Gela to Palermo to Messina Patton's "blitzkrieg" like armored forces sought to gain every advantage by constantly moving forward. Patton's policy was to initiate offensive action as opposed to reacting to enemy activities. The shock action, constant attack, amphibian envelopment, and bypass of selected enemy positions all demonstrate the

proper use of offense. These actions resulted in confusion within Axis command and control systems and among Italian soldiers. In a diary entry of 19 July, Patton wrote:

> My policy of continuous attack [offense] is correct. The farther we press, the more stuff we find abandoned that should not be abandoned. The Italians are fighting very well in face of certain defeat. They must crack soon. (2:293)

In another entry on 21 July, Patton again emphasizes the importance of this principle of war by referring to operations near Palermo:

> If the attack...works out, it will be a classic example of the proper use of armour. I told Gaffey and Maurice Rose [who headed combat commands] to take chances [act, rather than react] - to smoke the enemy and then charge him with tanks. I am sure that this will work as the enemy is jumpy and justly so, in the face of the power we can put against him. (2:295-296)

Although best exemplified by Patton's forces, there was no shortage in offensive will or capability in any of the Allied forces, including Montgomery's Eighth Army. As previously discussed, however, this offensive will and capability was not always directed at the proper objectives. Resultantly, this principle of war, lost some of its potential significance.

Axis

The only offense attempted by Axis forces during the campaign occurred as counterattacks to initial beach landings. Although conducted using elite German divisions, these counterattacks were quickly turned back by superior Allied firepower. Because of the rapid consolidation of Allied beachheads, good intelligence, and naval gunfire, the counterattacking Germans were forced to retreat. (2:277) Axis forces were in no position, without sizable reinforce-

ments, to conduct offensive operations. To do so against overwhelming Allied forces would have risked certain annihilation.

SURPRISE

> Surprise is the attack of an enemy at a time, place, and manner for which the enemy is neither prepared nor expecting an attack. The principle of surprise is achieved when an enemy is unable to react effectively to an attack. Surprise is achieved through security, deception, audacity, originality, and timely execution. Surprise can decisively shift the balance of power. Surprise gives attacking forces the advantage of seizing the initiative while forcing the enemy to react. When other factors influencing the conduct of war are unfavorable, surprise may be the key element in achieving the objective. The execution of surprise attacks can often reverse the military situation, generate opportunities for air and surface forces to seize the offensive, and disrupt the cohesion and fighting effectiveness of enemy forces. (14:2-5)

Allied

The invasion of Sicily obtained both strategic and tactical surprise. Deceptive movements of Allied shipping in the Mediterranean prior to the invasion caused Axis commanders to disagree where the Allies would strike next. Other deceptive tactics were also effective. For example, the Allies orchestrated a bizarre hoax, where a corpse bearing plans for an invasion of Sardinia and Greece was washed ashore in Spain. (3:89) As a result of these deceptive tactics, Axis forces were spread thinly throughout the Mediterranean. On Sicily, the German elite divisions were located inland since Axis intelligence offered few clues as to which coastline the Allies were likely to assault. General Guzzoni (Axis Commander in Sicily) originally favored concentration of forces in the east (would have been correct), while Field Marshal Kesselring (German Commander in Chief of the Southern Command)

favored a coastal defense. The compromise was to concentrate German forces inland and to guard the coast with poorly equipped Italian forces. This disposition of enemy forces, which resulted from successful Allied deception tactics, provided the essential elements for surprise attack. Montgomery described the Allied success with surprise as follows:

> The seaborne assault was an outstanding success. It was greatly facilitated by the failure of the enemy air force seriously to oppose it and because, as a result of the gale, the enemy garrison, already wearied by false alerts and scared, had relaxed its vigilance. The first waves of our assault achieved complete tactical surprise and the enemy's confusion and disorganization were such that he was unable to offer any co-ordinated opposition. (10:89)

Contributing to tactical surprise was the Allied use of airborne troops behind Axis lines. These forces were successful in securing key bridges, disrupting enemy communication, and causing confusion behind enemy lines. (12:107) Other examples of tactical surprise were inherent in Allied amphibian operations. Because of new technology, the Axis forces were surprised by the speed that the Allies moved across open beaches. New beaching and amphibian craft, used in Sicily for the first time, were instrumental in this increased capability. (2:309-310; 3:91) Toward the end of the campaign, Patton used these craft to surprise the Germans through amphibian envelopment. (2:315-321)

SECURITY

> Security protects friendly military operations from enemy activities which could hamper or defeat aerospace forces. Security is taking continuous, positive measures to prevent surprise and preserve freedom of action. Security involves active and passive defensive

> measures and the denial of useful information to an enemy. To deny an enemy knowledge of friendly capabilities and actions requires a concerted effort in both peace and war. Security protects friendly forces from an effective enemy attack through defensive operations and by masking the location, strength, and intentions of friendly forces. In conducting these actions, air commanders at all levels are ultimately responsible for the security of their forces. Security in aerospace operations is achieved through a combination of factors such as secrecy, disguise, operational security, deception, dispersal, maneuver, timing, posturing, and the defense and the hardening of forces. (14:2-5)

Allied

Allied actions in advance and during the Sicilian invasion provide excellent examples of this principle of war. Four specific action areas are discussed below. First, the Allied bombing of Axis airfields in the Mediterranean eliminated any serious threat by regional Axis air power to thwart the invasion. Axis airfields in Sicily, Italy, and Sardinia (see figure 2) were constantly attacked during the month preceding the invasion. (3:90) Combined with the amphibian capture of the islands of Lampedusa, Linosa, and Pantelleria (see figure 2) and associated airfields, the Allies gained air superiority. (3:90) This insured the security of the Sicily beach landings on 10 July. Montgomery wrote about this air advantage:

> The enemy long-range bombers had been pushed well back. ....The Allied air forces were dealing with the enemy in no uncertain way and it was not likely that his air forces would cause us any great trouble. (10:88)

Second, it appears evident from the memoirs of Montgomery and Eisenhower that the Allies had extensive intelligence prior to the invasion. Montgomery revealed that enemy strength, disposition of units, and Axis troop morale were known in detail. Even

the beach defenses, including the location of barbed wire obstacles, pillboxes, and coastal artillery, were known. (10:86) In a diary entry of 1 July 1943, Eisenhower showed his confidence in Allied preinvasion intelligence. This same entry also provides contemplated security actions:

> While I believe we are going to have some rather severe losses at certain of the beaches, I believe that on the whole the landing will go rather well and that we will get our assault formations substantially ashore during D-Day. The most critical thing will be the rapid landing of necessary artillery and anti-tank and anti-aircraft equipment, so that security of these assaulting echelons will be provided...
>
> In preparation for all this, our air force is conducting a well-considered program of bombing to hold down the enemy air strength and to make his reinforcement and supply of Husky difficult. (5:98)

Third, Allied secrecy and deception, applied extensively in advance of the invasion, also contributed to the security of assaulting forces. The same examples of deception detailed in the earlier discussion on surprise also apply to this principle of war. Allied deception resulted in disagreement within the Axis high command as to where the Allies would attack in the Mediterranean. Resultantly, Axis commanders in Sicily had their forces too widely dispersed which prevented them from effectively countering Allied beach landings. Fourth, the Allied use of airborne troops during the invasion proved valuable in securing the success of beach assaults. (1:107) These forces were dropped behind enemy lines and were able to destroy Axis lines of communication, secure bridgeheads, and divert enemy beach concentrations.

Axis

The German defenses during the last three weeks protected the orderly withdrawal of the Axis forces from Sicily. The Germans

created a formidable defense by supplementing the naturally defendable terrain with engineer constructed fortifications. As the line of contact moved toward Messina it progressively became shorter allowing defense in depth with fewer troops. The German ability to control the tempo of their withdrawal while maintaining their own security contributed to their unimpeded retrograde across the Straits of Messina. Even four attempts at amphibian envelopment failed to interdict the German withdrawal.

MASS and ECONOMY OF FORCE

> Success in achieving objectives with aerospace power requires a proper balance between the principles of mass and economy of force. Concentrated firepower can overwhelm enemy defenses and secure an objective at the right time and place. Because of their characteristics and capabilities, aerospace forces possess the ability to concentrate enormous decisive striking power upon selected targets when and where it is needed most. The impact of these attacks can break the enemy's defenses, disrupt his plan of attack, destroy the cohesion of his forces, produce the psychological shock that may thwart a critical enemy thrust, or create an opportunity for friendly forces to seize the offensive. Concurrently, using economy of force permits a commander to execute attacks with appropriate mass at the critical time and place without wasting resources on secondary objectives. (14:2-6)

Allied

Generally, the application of mass and economy of force by the Allies in Sicily is poorly represented. The overwhelming air power used to destroy Axis airfields and the subsequent establishment of Allied beachheads are the only apparent exceptions. The poor representation of these principles relates to the previously described Allied problems associated with the principle of objective. Since Alexander allowed his armies to concentrate

on secondary objectives, like Patton's march to Palermo, he sacrificed early opportunities to apply mass and economy of force in securing the primary Allied objective of Messina. In fact, Patton's march to Palermo provides an excellent example of violating the principle of economy of force. Here, the Allies clearly wasted resources on a secondary objective. Additionally, Patton's march to Palermo increased Axis consolidation in the Catania plain, which eliminated any chance for a rapid march north by Montgomery's Eighth Army. Had the two armies advanced northward together in a coordinated effort, their superior combat power and maneuverability could have prevented Axis consolidation. It is likely, that the concentrated firepower of both armies could have overwhelmed the formidable Axis defenses in the Catania plain near Mount Etna (see figure 6). By constant attack and coordinated maneuver the two armies in mass could have trapped and destroyed the enemy, instead of allowing his escape.

MANEUVER

> War is a complex interaction of moves and countermoves. Maneuver is the movement of friendly forces in relation to enemy forces. Commanders seek to maneuver their strengths selectively against an enemy's weakness while avoiding engagements with forces of superior strength. Effective use of maneuver can maintain the initiative, dictate the terms of engagement, retain security, and position forces at the right time and place to execute surprise attacks. Maneuver permits rapid massing of combat power and effective disengagement of forces. While maneuver is essential, it is not without risk. Moving large forces may lead to loss of cohesion and control. (14:2-6)

Allied

The eventual displacement of the Axis forces in the Catania

plain (see figure 6) was accomplished by Allied application of this principle of war. After several days of fierce fighting and high British casualties, Montgomery was unable to break through German defenses. As the following quote indicates, Montgomery decided to change his tactic to one of manuever in order to gain the initiative:

> On 21 July I decided that it was necessary to shift the main weight [Montgomery's strength] of the Eighth Army offensive to the left flank [Axis weakness]. It was by then quite clear that the enemy was going to hold Catania to the last and to persist with the direct advance on the axis would result in heavy casualties which I could not afford. A better approach would be to pass round the north of Mount Etna and come in behind him [strength against weakness]. (10:98)

As figure six clearly shows, the maneuver of Montgomery's Seventy-Eighth and Fifty-First divisions around the right flank of the German defense caused the eventual withdrawal of the Hermann Goering Panzer Division to the north. The result was the disintegration of the Catania defensive line. Montgomery effectively applied this principle of war by attacking the enemy's weak flanks, while avoiding the continued direct engagement of Axis defenses.

The four Allied amphibian envelopment attempts, although not totally successful, also demonstrate this principle of war. German defenses in the northeast after 2 August (see figure 6) were extremely effective in delaying the Allied advance. Although limited by the availability of landing craft, Patton was willing to risk the security of small amphibian forces in order to break the stalemate on the front. (2:312) Although these envelopments were not successful in trapping large numbers of German troops, the confusion behind enemy lines hastened the planned withdrawal of Axis forces. (2:320)

TIMING and TEMPO

> Timing and tempo is the principle of executing military operations at a point in time and at a rate which optimizes the use of friendly forces and which inhibits or denies the effectiveness of enemy forces. The purpose is to dominate the action, to remain unpredictable, and to create uncertainity in the mind of the enemy. Commanders seek to influence the timing and tempo of military actions by seizing the initiative and operating beyond the enemy's ability to react effectively. (14:2-6)

Allied

Patton's application of this principle of war was prevalent throughout World War II. Under his dynamic leadership, his armies were either on the offensive or seeking to gain the initiative. In his drive across western Sicily to Palermo, Patton sought to dominate the action through constant attack. He exploited the lowering enemy morale by increasing the tempo of his attacks. By massing his firepower at the right time, Patton succeeded in the constant penetration of enemy defenses. The constant maneuver and speed of movement of Patton's Seventh Army kept the enemy confused and unable to consolidate coordinated defenses. The uncertainty of what Patton would do next resulted in the surrender of thousands of Italian soldiers. In reviewing quotations of Patton, the use of timing and tempo by the Seventh Army in Sicily is evident. On 13 July 1943, Patton wrote in his diary:

> The tremendous effort [the Italians] put into the construction of bands of wire, pillboxes, etc. proved abortive due to the failure of the enemy to show courage in defending them....
>
> Our success...was due to our policy of continuous and violent attack...We are holding the initiative and must continue to do so. (2:286)

In a battle order, he told his troops:

> Remember that, as attackers, we have the initiative. We must retain this tremendous advantage by attacking rapidly, viciously, ruthlessly, without rest, however tired,.... (2:292)

After Palermo had been captured, Patton made the following entry in his diary. His thoughts provide further meaning for this principle of war.

> I feel that future students of the Command and General Staff School will study the campaign of Palermo as a classic example of the use of tanks. I held them back far enough so that the enemy could not tell where they were to be used [timing]; then when the infantry had found the hole, the tanks went through and in large numbers and fast [tempo]. Such methods assure victory and reduce losses,.... (2:296-297)

Axis

The Germans were able to control the battle front in the later stages of the campaign. They established formidable defenses in depth near Messina, thereby minimizing bottlenecks in their withdrawal. Withdrawing only when it met their well conceived retrograde plan, the Germans were able to control the tempo of the operation to suit their objectives. This allowed the orderly withdrawal of thousands of troops and tons of material to the Italian mainland.

UNITY OF COMMAND

> Unity of command is the principle of vesting appropriate authority and responsibility in a single commander to effect unity of effort in carrying out an assigned task. Unity of command provides for the effective exercise of leadership and power of decision over assigned forces for the purpose of achieving a common objective. Unity of command obtains unity of effort by the coordinated action of all forces toward a common goal. While coordination may be attained by cooperation, it is best achieved by giving a single commander full authority. (14:2-6)

Allied

As the Supreme Allied Commander, Eisenhower had been given full authority by the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff for the planning and execution of the Sicilian Campaign. Exercising his authority and responsibility, Eisenhower decided the final invasion plan for Sicily. His decision demonstrates the importance of unity of command in accomplishing military objectives. Because of the service parochialism and nationalistic competition among Allied military forces, planning resulted in multiple variations of two invasion plans. After hearing the views of all his service component commanders (see figure 1), Eisenhower decided the invasion would occur on the southern coast of Sicily. Without the unity of command provided by a Supreme Allied Commander, it appears doubtful that a coordinated plan could have evolved by relying solely on the cooperation of air, land, and naval representatives. The invasion plan decision put an end to disjointed and uncoordinated planning efforts and necessitated unity of effort among the Allies to execute a common plan. Clearly, the Allied command structure for Sicily (see figure 1), established by joint agreement of Churchill and Roosevelt, exemplifies the proper application of this principle of war.

Axis

With recent German defeats on the Eastern Front and in North Africa, the Sicilian invasion aggravated an already declining Axis unity. (13:141-142) Manifested by Allied successes in North Africa, Italian allegiance to the Third Reich rapidly declined. Resultantly, the chain of command in Hitler's Southern Command became

less effective. Field Marshal Kesselring, Commander-in-Chief South-west, received his orders directly from Hitler. (13:158) Subordinate to Kesselring was General Guzzoni, commander of the Italian Sixth Army and all land forces on Sicily. Initially, this consisted of six Italian and two German divisions. (2:275) After the Allied invasion, General Guzzoni, contrary to Hitler's instructions, pursued a strategy of protecting an escape route through Messina. (2:280) Meanwhile, Kesselring, with orders from Hitler, reinforced Sicily with two more German divisions with the objective of defending the island. (2:280) Complicating Axis unity of effort even further, Kesselring sent General Hube to act as a corps commander over the two newly arrived divisions. Taking orders directly from Kesselring, Hube's forces operated independently of Guzzoni's Sixth Army. The result was differing military objectives, strategies, and tactics between Italian and German commanders. With Mussolini's fall from power on 25 July 1943, German commanders found themselves defending the island without Italian assistance. (13:142) Much of the Italian Army either surrendered or sought escape to Italy. Lacking unity of command, Axis commanders were unable to effectively employ available military assets to defeat Allied forces.

SIMPLICITY

> To achieve a unity of effort toward a common goal, guidance must be quick, clear, and concise - it must have simplicity. Simplicity promotes understanding, reduces confusion, and permits ease of execution in the intense and uncertain environment of combat. Simplicity adds to the cohesion of a force by providing unambiguous guidance that fosters a clear understanding

> of expected actions. Simplicity is an important ingredient in achieving victory, and it must pervade all levels of a military operation. (14:2-7)

Allied

This principle of war is demonstrated by the guidance and orders of General Patton. His policy of constant attack left little doubt in his subordinates as to what should be done in the absence of specific orders. As long as his divisions and brigades were moving forward or preparing to regain the initiative, they were in good standing with Patton. Speaking to the troops of the 45th Infantry Division prior to the Sicilian invasion, Patton said:

> Remember that the enemy is just as freightened as you are, probably more so. They are not supermen. We have licked the best of them, and those whom we shall face in the next fight are not the cream of the crop. Further, remember that in fist fights or in battle the attacker wins (a simplistic comparison). You cannot win by parrying. Yet the enemy, being uncertain of our intentions, must parry.
>
> The way to prevent the enemy from attacking you is to attack him, and keep right on attacking him. This prevents him from getting set... Death in battle is a function of time and effective hostile fire. You reduce the time by rapid movement. (4:398)

This was Patton's doctrine for battle. Politics, logistics, flank security, and deception of the enemy he left to others. His command was simplistic, built on courage, overwhelming mass, and most importantly, inspirational leadership.

Axis

With defeats in the east at the hands of the Russians, Italy crumbling in the south, and a second front expected to the west, Hitler was no longer dictating the course of the war. (13:141) His forces were on the defensive everywhere, and therefore; Axis strategy became more simplistic. Initially, Hitler ordered that

Sicily be defended, even though the Allies had overwhelming superiority. (2:280) Later, Kesselring convinced Hitler that Axis forces should protect the approaches to Messina to allow later retrograde to Italy. The strategy was simply to delay the Allied advance as long as possible thereby allowing reinforcement of the Italian mainland. The following directive to Kesselring amplifies Hitler's simplistic approach to defensive strategy.

> It is not sufficient to give clear and tactically correct orders. All officers and men of the Army, the Air Force, and the Naval forces must be penetrated by a fanatical will to end this battle [referring to the upcoming Italian Campaign] victoriously, and never to relax until the last enemy soldier has been destroyed or thrown back into the sea.
>
> The fight must be hard and merciless, not only against the enemy, but against all officers and units who fail in this decisive hour. (13:158)

In this directive, Hitler's guidance is simple, leaving no doubt as to what he expected.

LOGISTICS

> Logistics is the principle of sustaining both man and machine in combat. Logistics is the principle of obtaining, moving, and maintaining warfighting potential. Success in warfare depends on getting sufficient men and machines in the right position at the right time. (14:2-7)

Allied

The proper application of this principle of war is shown by Allied Logistics Over The Shore (LOTS) operations in Sicily. This campaign was the first in the war where large forces had to be sustained over open beaches. (10:104) Essential to the success of the invasion was the detailed planning and execution of logistical requirements. The keen interest in logistics by the Allies in Sicily is detailed by Montgomery:

> Although the campaign in Sicily lasted thirty-eight days only, the administrative [logistics] problems involved both in mounting the expedition and during the campaign itself were of great interest. (10:104)

The Allies knew that until key ports were captured, the support of assaulting forces would have to be across the beaches. Montgomery described the Allied dilemma as follows:

> During the planning stage there were many who expressed the gravest doubts as to the wisdom of depending upon beach maintenance, but there was no alternative to the acceptance of the risks involved once the decision had been made to land the Eastern and Western Task Forces side by side. (10:104)

Eisenhower explained in his diary that the final decision on the invasion plan was based on logistical concerns. (5:96-97) He explained the decision making process as follows:

> The whole problem was thrown back into the hands of the logistical people, and two factors had come about that convinced the logistic people that something more might be done than was originally contemplated. These factors were the provision of more LCT's [landing craft, tanks], which would be very valuable in maintenance [logistical support], and the production and arrival here of a number of "ducks" [amphibian trucks], with which it is hoped to supply [our troops] over the beaches rather effectively. The logistic section finally concluded that the concentrated assault in the southeast could probably be maintained and, consequently, we went back to that plan. (5:97)

With the advent of new landing craft technology and production, the Allies were able to successfully support the invasion. Montgomery described Allied logistical success as follows:

> In the event experience in Sicily showed that large forces can be maintained over open beaches, given adequate resources in landing craft and specialized equipment.... (10:104)

The Allies considered logistics as a key determinate in the development of their invasion plans. During the campaign, air and naval

superiority kept open the lines of communication. This insured the sustainment of Allied logistical systems.

COHESION

> Cohesion is the principle of establishing and maintaining the warfighting spirit and capability of a force to win. Cohesion is the cement that holds a unit together through the trials of combat and is critical to the fighting effectiveness of a force. Throughout military experience, cohesive forces have generally achieved victory, while disjointed efforts have usually met defeat. Cohesion depends directly on the spirit a leader inspires in his people, the shared experiences of a force in training or combat, and the sustained operational capability of a force. Commanders build cohesion through effective leadership and generating a sense of common identity and shared purpose. Leaders maintain cohesion by communicating objectives clearly, demonstrating genuine concern for the morale and welfare of their people, and employing men and machines according to the dictates of sound military doctrine. Cohesion in a force is produced over time through effective leadership at all levels of command. (14:2-8)

Allied

This principle of war is best exampled by the leadership effectiveness of General Patton. A modern American patriot, Patton effectively communicated American ideals to his soldiers and thereby instilled in them a fighting spirit. Through dynamic speeches and personal showmanship he stressed pride in all that is American. He emphasized Duty, Honor, Country (the officer's code) in inspiring his soldiers to fight and win as a team. In his message to his troops prior to the Sicily invasion, Patton said:

> We are indeed honored in having been selected [for]... this new and greater attack against the Axis... When we land we will meet German and Italian soldiers whom it is our honor and privilege to attack and destroy...During the last year we Americans have met and defeated the best troops Germany, Italy, and Japan possess. Many of us have shared in these glorious victories. Those of

> you who have not been so fortunate now have your opportunity to gain equal fame.
>
> In landing operations, retreat is impossible. To surrender is as ignoble as it is foolish... However tired and hungry you may be, the enemy will be more tired and more hungry - keep punching. No man is beaten until he thinks he is... Civilians who have the stupidity to fight us we will kill. Those who remain passive will not be harmed... The glory of American arms, the honor of our country, the future of the whole world rests in your individual hands. See to it that you are worthy of this great trust. (2:274-275)

Patton, a perfectionist, was autocratic in pursuit of the professional performance of his subordinates. He mandated competent leadership, high standards, rigid discipline, and continual training throughout his command. Molding his troops into a cohesive force, his Seventh Army swept across Sicily with devastating results. During Patton's march to Palermo, the Seventh Army captured thousands of Axis prisoners and tons of warfighting material. Patton's victory at Palermo contributed to the fall from power of Mussolini and eventual collapse of the Axis alliance. An army of high morale and esprit, the Seventh could not be denied victory in Sicily.

Though tough in command methods, Patton deeply cared for his soldiers. Alexander wrote in his memoirs:

> In spite of all his bravura and toughness and terrific drive General Georgie Patton was a very emotional man. He loved his men and they loved him. I have been with him at the front when he was greeted with demonstrations of affection by his soldiers; and there were- as I saw for myself - tears running down his cheeks. (1:45)

Patton constantly visited field hospitals. He would move from litter to litter, talking with and congratulating the troops on their successes on the battlefield. (4:321) It was not unusual

for him to kneel and pray for his soldiers. In his diary on 2 August 1943, Patton wrote:

> Inspected all sick and wounded at the ... hospital. Pinned on some 40 Purple Hearts on men hurt in air raid. One man was dying and had an oxygen mask on, so I knelt down and pinned the Purple Heart on him, and he seemed to understand although he could not speak... (2:311)

Patton was extremely confident in his ability to lead and inspire. (4:42) In my view, he was the epitome of one who leads by example. His leadership in Sicily magnified the confidence, loyalty, courage, and thus the cohesion of the Seventh Army.

Axis

German and Italian cohesion eroded rapidly in the aftermath of Allied successes in North Africa. As a result of Allied operations in North Africa and the Mediterranean, Italy's empire had been destroyed. With her armies extensively weakened and cities bombarded by Allied air power, the Italian people grew weary of the war. (6:440) Even prior to the Sicily invasion, some senior military leaders had been conspiring with the royal court to force Mussolini to seek peace with the Allies. With an invasion of southern Europe threatened, the Italian people no longer had faith in an alliance with Germany. By the time the invasion occurred, Italian resolve had nearly collapsed. (7:41) Only a week after the invasion of Sicily, General Ambrosio (Chief of the General Italian Staff) presented Mussolini an ultimatum demanding peace negotiations. (7:41) A week later, Mussolini resigned. The Allied invasion of Sicily climaxed an already eroded Axis alliance, void of cohesion.

Chapter Three

SEMINAR GUIDANCE

RECOMMENDED OBJECTIVES

Comprehend the strategy process.

Given a description of the Sicilian Campaign, including pre-invasion planning, contrast American and British national objectives, grand strategy, military strategy, and battlefield strategy.

Comprehend the influence that combined operations has on the strategy process.

Explain how combined military operations complicates the strategy process.

Comprehend the principles of war.

Explain the influence of the principles of war in determining the critical aspects and final outcome of the Sicilian Campaign.

NOTES FOR SEMINAR CHAIRPERSON

This seminar is designed to further course officer understanding of the Strategy Process Model through the study of an important campaign in military history. The Sicilian Campaign of World War II was selected because it demonstrates many of the external factors that constrict strategy determination. Assigned readings suggest that combined operations complicates strategy formulation. Your task therefore is to guide seminar members in applying the strategy process model to the combined operational environment of the Sicilian Campaign. You must bring together key information contained in the lecture, readings, course officer briefings and seminar discussion to insure the attainment of seminar objectives. Ensure briefings and seminar discussion complement one another. To insure success, you will need to become thoroughly familiar with the briefing materials, assigned reading, and Chapter 1 of Introduction to Strategy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Lead-Off Question

At the Casablanca Conference, what was the principle difference between British and American grand strategy in defeating Nazi Germany?

Discussion

The Americans favored a cross-Channel invasion of France in 1943, while the British continued to favor a Mediterranean strategy. The Americans wanted to defeat the Germans quickly so the war effort could shift to the Pacific. The American people were anxious to avenge the attack on Pearl Harbor. Additionally, Russia pressured the United States for a second front in Europe to relieve German pressure on the Eastern Front. The British, on the other hand, were cautious and wanted to avoid any chance of a disastrous cross-Channel attack. Their Mediterranean strategy sought to wear the Germans down by knocking Italy out of the war, opening up the Mediterranean lines of communication, and forcing the German transfer of units south. They believed this to be the best way to weaken the Nazi stranglehold on Europe. They also believed that Turkey would join the Allies, should a Mediterranean strategy be pursued.

a. Follow-up Question

What was the Allied military strategy for the invasion and defeat of Axis forces on Sicily?

Discussion

Allied strategy for the invasion and subsequent defeat of Axis forces consisted of four operational phases. First, preliminary

operations by Naval and Air forces would insure the security of the beach landings. Naval forces would secure Mediterranean lines of communication. Naval diversionary shipping would conceal the actual invasion location. Air forces would attack Axis airfields in the Mediterranean to gain air superiority. Second, an amphibian assault would be conducted on the southern coastline of Sicily assisted by airborne landings. Key to this strategy, was the use of newly developed landing craft which would enable the Allies to rapidly traverse hostile beaches. Initial objectives were the ports of Syracuse and Licata, and nearby airfields. Third, Allied armies would establish firm beachheads from which to conduct further operations inland. Fourth, two mutually supporting armies would push north to cut the island in two. The objective was to trap Axis forces west of Messina, thereby preventing their escape to Italy.

b. Follow-up Question

Why did Alexander allow Patton's Seventh Army to drive west toward Palermo contrary to Allied military strategy?

Discussion

When Montgomery's drive north along the eastern coast was stalled by Axis defenses, he insisted on additional manuever space to the west. This meant that Patton would have to relinquish the Caltagirone Road which had previously been reserved for his army. Once Alexander ordered the road reserved for Montgomery, Patton convinced Alexander to allow his army to march on Palermo. In Sicily, Patton and Montgomery competed for international recognition of their respective armies. Instead of mutually supporting one another, they became involved in a race to Messina. Sound Allied military strategy was compromised in Sicily because Alexander attempted to appease the demands of Patton and Montgomery. The resulting split of the two armies contributed to Axis consolidation of forces in eastern Sicily and eventual German escape to the Italian mainland.

2. Lead-Off Question

How did the combined operations aspect of the Sicilian Campaign complicate strategy determination?

Discussion

Strategy formulation for the Sicilian Campaign was complex because the British and Americans did not always agree on the means of achieving ends (or objectives). Two nations seeking common objectives increases the complexity of the strategy process. Specifically, the influence of certain external factors constrained the development and execution of Allied strategy. First, domestic political influences differed. The American view of rapidly defeating the Germans to allow concentration on Japan conflicted

with the more conservative British Mediterranean strategy. The American people urged their leaders to conduct a decisive engagement with Germany. The British people urged their leaders not to repeat the disastrous loss of life that had occurred in Europe earlier in the war. Second, there were differences in post war considerations. A key British objective in the war was the maintenance and possible expansion of their empire. The British invisioned a return to the past where they would once again rule the seas. This objective dictated the continued control of shipping lanes in the Mediterranean. The Americans, on the other hand, invisioned a rapid ending of hostilities in Europe and a unison of free nations that would outlaw war forever. Third, there were military biases. Generally, British leaders in Sicily looked upon the green Americans as inferior militarily. The Americans viewed the British as lacking military initiative and too cautious in the conduct of military operations. Service parochialism also permeated the chain of command.

Collectively, these competing influences contributed significantly to three shortcomings of Allied operations in Sicily. First, they contributed to the absence of specific plans for the reduction of the island. Second, the splitting of the two Allied armies allowed Axis consolidation and escape. Third, the Allies failed to coordinate an effective interdiction campaign against the withdrawing Axis forces.

Follow-Up Question

What problems of combined operational planning did the Sicilian Campaign demonstrate?

Discussion

Operational planning became disjointed because of poor Allied communication and coordination. Establishment of several major planning headquarters separated by great distances adversely affected cohesive planning. Initially, with little cross-service coordination, the two Allied armies developed separate invasion plans. Combined operational planning is better served at consolidated headquarters. Here, service component planners can wargame alternate operational scenarios and more effectively manage limited warfighting assets. Allies that expect to fight effectively together, must plan together.

3. Lead-Off Question

What Allied violations of the principles of war contributed to the German escape from Sicily?

Discussion

Opinions will vary in answering this question; concensus is not required.

The violation of objective, mass, economy of force, and timing and tempo contributed to the German escape. When Patton marched west to Palermo, the Allies sacrificed their original objective of rapidly cutting the island in two. If the Allies had concentrated their overwhelming firepower against Axis defenses in the Catania plain, they could have quickly marched northward and trapped Axis forces west of Messina. Messina, after all, was the primary Allied tactical objective. They violated economy of force when an entire army was allowed to march on the secondary objective of Palermo. Later, after Axis forces consolidated formidable defenses near Messina, the Allies did not effectively interdict the Axis withdrawal to Italy (see figure 6). The Allies failed to take advantage of superior air, land, and naval forces in interdicting the methodical (3-17 August) Axis retrograde. Only amphibian envelopment and limited air strikes were employed to thwart the Axis escape. The Allies failed to use overwhelming firepower (mass) effectively at a point in time (3-17August) and at a rate (tempo) that would have optimized the use of available forces in destroying the enemy (objective).

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